

Adult Bible Studies

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Pondering God's Steadfast Love Psalm 48:1-3, 9-14

Royse City United Methodist Church in Royse City, Texas, has a Christmas Eve tradition of giving its offering to charity. In 2017, half of that offering went to “an elementary school down the street, to help cover the cost of school lunches for families that had fallen behind in payments.” Pastor Chris Everson asked, “What would it look like if we did this for the entire [school district]?” In 2018, the 200-member church gave over \$10,000 to local schools. According to the school district, “the church paid debts for 226 families totaling around \$6,000. The rest of the donation money is set aside to help students for the rest of the school year.” Everson said, “If the church does not impact the community the church is in, then the church isn't doing its job. With us having the opportunity to make an impact, then we are doing what Christ has called us to do—serve the least of these.”¹

The student book author writes, “We need to perform tangible, loving actions to actual people. . . . It's got to demonstrate itself in how we reflect God's love in the communities where we live and work.”² The actions and inactions of churches write testimonies about God in and for local communities. Actions of love give witness to God's love for all people. Actions of love say to the community that God cares about them.

The forgiveness of lunch debt told the Royse City community that God cares about them, that God cares about hungry children and struggling families. Royse City United Methodist Church told the community that they care, too. Sometimes, a church is the only reflection of God in local communities, and the church has an obligation to be a reflection of God's love in, for, and with the local community. May each of our churches reflect God's love for those in our local communities who need to know someone cares.

1. How do the actions and inactions of a church write testimonies about God in and for local communities? How do these testimonies influence how a local community views area churches?
2. How is your faith community a reflection of God in your local community? How might your faith community become a better writer of testimonies about God for your local community?

Reverend Katie Shockley is a licensed local pastor and serves as pastor of Community United Methodist Church in Copeville, Texas.

¹From “North Texas Church Pays Off Entire District's School Lunch Debt,” by Diana Zoga, NBCDFW.com (nbcdfw.com/news/local/North-Texas-Church-Pays-off-Entire-Districts-School-Lunch-Debt-504352571.html).

²From *Adult Bible Studies*, Winter 2018-2019, by Stan Purdum (Cokesbury, 2018); page 81.

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